மறைந்த தாரகை
மாமனிதர் தருமரத்தினம் சிவராம் அவர்களின்
நினைவு அஞ்சலி மலர்

Memorial Tribute to Mamanithar Dharmaratnam Sivaram (Taraki)



United States Of America

மாமனிதர் தர்மரட்ணம் சிவராம் (தராக்கி)

Mamanithar Dharmaratnam Sivaram (Taraki)



மண்ணில் தராக்கி:

Born: August 11, 1959

விண்ணில் தாரகை:

Rest: April 28, 2005

Journalist and a leading Tamil intellectual Mr. Dharmaratnam Puvirajakeerthi Sivaram who was also known as Taraki was abducted and murdered in Sri Lanka on Thursday, April 28, 2005 in Colombo. He was abducted in front of Bampalapitiya police station and his body has been recovered behind the Sri Lankan parliament in the High Security Zone.

Mr. Sivaram was well respected around the world for his political and military analysis relating to Sri Lanka. Behind this dark and spectacled man was a wealth of information, insights and intellectual talents, the power of which was radiating a warmth and humanness which none of us could resist.

Tamil Americans condemn this cowardly act to silence a journalist who was purely carrying out his profession. We urge international organizations to pressure Sri Lankan government authorities to identify and bring to justice persons responsible for this murder.

Tamil Americans express their condolences to the members of Mr. Sivaram's family.

English Translation of Award Citation

Sivaram has been bestowed with the Most Eminent Person (Mamanithar) award by the Liberation Tigers' leadership.

" The Tamil people have lost today a highly principled man who deeply loved them and the Tamil Nation. A voice that echoed the freedom of the Tamil people and their homeland, Tamil Eelam had been silenced today. An eminent Tamil journalist had fallen victim to the enemy's act of cowardice.

Humble and honest, Mr.Dharmaratnam Sivaram is a unique person. He is knowledgeable and is an expert in the field of journalism. As an internationally renowned journalist, Sivaram does not need any introduction.

Through his writings, he brought out the Tamil National question in the international arena with clarity and cohesion. Diligently and cleverly, he exposed to the international and diplomatic community, the false propaganda undertaken by the Sinhala regime. Positioning him in the Sinhala stronghold, Sivaram forthrightly told the outer world the injustices and the atrocities perpetrated by the Sinhala ruling elite on the Tamil Nation. Although facing danger and threats, Sivaram fought against injustice fearlessly with courage. Above all, he relentlessly worked to keep the Tamil people politically vigilant. The yeoman service rendered by him is eternally praiseworthy.

Respecting his love of the Nation and his love for freedom, I am proud to confer posthumously on Mr.Dharmaratnam Sivaram, the noble National Award of "Great Man". Death never destroys great men who have lived for lofty ideals. They have an everlasting place in the history of our Nation.

V.Pirapaharan,
Leader, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

தமிழீழ விடுதலைப் புலிகள்
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

தலைமைச் செயலகம்,
தமிழீழ விடுதலைப் புலிகள்,
தமிழீழம்.
30/04/2005.

தமிழ் மண்ணையும் தமிழ் மக்களையும் ஆழமாக நேசித்த ஒரு உயர்ந்த மனிதரை தமிழர் தேசம் இன்று இழந்துவிட்டது. தமிழீழ மண்ணின் விடிவிற்காகவும் தமிழீழ மக்களின் விடுதலைக்காகவும் ஓங்கிஒலித்த ஒரு உரிமைக் குரல் இன்று ஓய்ந்துவிட்டது. எதிரியின் கோழைத்தனமான தாக்குதலுக்கு ஒரு தலைசிறந்த தமிழ்ப் பத்திரிகையாளர் பலியாகிவிட்டார்.

திரு. தர்மரட்ணம் சிவராம் அவர்கள் எளிமையும் நேர்மையும் பொருந்திய ஒரு தனித்துவமான மனிதர். நிறைந்த அறிவு படைத்தவர். எழுத்துத்துறையில் மிகுந்த விற்பனர். உலக அரங்கில் மிகவும் பிரபலமான பத்திரிகையாளர். இவருக்கு அறிமுகமே தேவையில்லை.

இவர் தனது எழுத்துக்களால் தமிழரின் தேசியப் பிரச்சினையை உலக அரங்கிலே மிகவும் நேர்த்தியான முறையில் தெளிவாக எடுத்துக்கூறினார். சிங்கள அரசு மேற்கொண்டுவருகின்ற அப்பட்டமான பொய்ப்பரப்புரைகளை சர்வதேச சமூகத்திற்கும் இராஜதந்திர சமூகத்திற்கும் மிகச் சாதுரியமாகவும் சாமர்த்தியமாகவும் அம்பலப்படுத்தினார். சிங்களப் பேரினவாதத்தின் கோட்டையில் நின்றுகொண்டே அது தமிழர் தேசத்திற்கு எதிராகப் புரிகின்ற அநீதிகளையும் அக்கிரமங்களையும் உலகிற்கு உறுதியாக எடுத்துக்கூறினார். ஆபத்துக்களையும் அச்சுறுத்தல்களையும் எதிர்கொண்டபோதும், அஞ்சா நெஞ்சுடன் அநீதியை எதிர்த்துநின்றார். எல்லாவற்றுக்கும் மேலாக, எம்மக்களுக்கு ஓயாது அரசியல் விழிப்புணர்வூட்டி, தமிழ்த் தேசியத்தைத் தொடர்ந்து வலுப்படுத்தினார். அன்னார் ஆற்றிய அரும்பணி என்றுமே போற்றுதற்குரியது.

திரு. தர்மரட்ணம் சிவராம் அவர்களின் இனப்பற்றிற்கும், விடுதலைப் பற்றிற்கும் மதிப்பளித்து, அவரது நற்பணியை கௌரவிக்கும் முகமாக "மாமனிதர்" என்ற அதியுயர் தேசிய விருதை அவருக்கு வழங்குவதில் நான் பெருமையடைகிறேன். உன்னத இலட்சியத்திற்காக வாழ்ந்த உயர்ந்த மனிதர்களை சாவு அழித்துவிடுவதில்லை. எமது தேசத்தின் வரலாற்றில் அவர்களுக்கு என்றும் அழியாத இடமுண்டு.

"புலிகளின் தாகம் தமிழீழத் தாயகம்"

வே. பிரபாகரன்
(வே. பிரபாகரன்)
தலைவர்,
தமிழீழ விடுதலைப் புலிகள்.

WORLD TAMIL COORDINATING COMMITTEE

World Tamil Coordinating Committee

170-10 Cedarcroft Road,Suite 1B,Jamaica, NY 11432,USA

A voice of truth has been brutally silenced. A profound geopolitical strategic thinker has been cruelly eliminated. The World Tamil Coordinating Committee is angry and desolate over the tragic sudden end to the great life of Mr. Dharmaratnam Sivaram, popularly known as "Taraki."

As the Tamil National Leader Mr. Velupillai Pirabaharan stated, while conferring the title of "great man" to Mr. Sivaram posthumously, "Through his writings, he brought out the Tamil national question in the international arena with clarity and cohesion. Diligently and cleverly, he exposed to the international and diplomatic community the false propaganda undertaken by the Sinhala regime."

Mr. Sivaram shone light in his writing on the structural, political and racial impediments inherent in the "Sri Lankan state" which inhibit the Tamil people from exercising their right to self-determination and sharing power in the island of Sri Lanka. Due to his deep understanding of geopolitical reality, he demonstrated in his writing how the national conflict in the island has been transformed into a subject of international politics and international relations. Comparing peace processes around the world, he cautioned the Tamil leadership to be vigilant of potential peace traps. Due to his proximity to the ground situation, his incredible access to the various stakeholders in the Tamil national conflict, his profound knowledge of the historic, geographic and strategic aspects of the Tamils' campaign for self-determination and his thoughtful analyses, his writings were read and respected by policymakers concerned with South Asia around the world.

Mr. Sivaram, who was subject to several previous attempts on his life and to constant intimidation by the Sri Lankan armed forces, was aware of the dangers to his life. However, because of his dedication to seeking the truth and serving the cause, he refused to be pushed out of the island. His moral commitment and magnificent courage defies description.

The abduction of Mr. Sivaram in front of a police station in the capital of "Sri Lanka" and the dumping of his body in the "high security zone" near the parliament are telling testimonies of the state of the rule of law, democracy, and the peace process in the "Sri Lankan state." The brutal killing of Mr. Sivaram is not an isolated incident. This is the most recent in a pattern and practice of eliminating journalists, intellectuals, and unarmed political leaders on the island. Some segments of the media and some high profile human rights organizations attempt to trivialize the killing of Mr. Sivaram by equating it with the killings of the paramilitary personnel and military intelligence agents. This is not only offensive but also a betrayal of the very human rights that they claim to protect. This trivialization also smokescreens the real situation in the island of Sri Lanka.

To put it at its most charitable, Mr. Sivaram's death demonstrates the Government of Sri Lanka's unwillingness and inability to protect the basic right to life of independent thinkers even during this period of ceasefire in the capital — "Sri Lanka" is now a failed state. The fact that the body of Mr. Sivaram was found in the "high security zone" to which only the Sri Lankan armed forces or persons authorized by Sri Lankan armed forces have access, points the finger in the direction of those very armed forces. The circumstances surrounding Mr. Sivaram's death illustrate once again that "Sri Lanka" is rapidly becoming a "rough state."

Even though Mr. Sivaram is physically no longer with us, he has left his soul: the Tamils' quest for the realization of their right to self-determination. His writings are an inspiration for us. The best way to honor his memory is to realize his dream. Let us dedicate ourselves to his noble cause.

Ilankai Tamil Sangam Inc.

PO Box 46, Maryknoll, NY 10545

Press Release
May 01, 2005

We, representing the Tamil Community in the US, condemn in the strongest possible terms the abduction and brutal murder of the respected journalist Dharmaratnam Sivaram in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Thursday.

We hold the Government of Sri Lanka accountable for Sivaram's death based on the circumstances of his abduction, and a long pattern of extra-judicial, anti-democratic, and otherwise despicable actions. We urge the International Community to take measures to prevent the Government from further victimizing its unfortunate citizens.

Mr. Sivaram was the editor and principal force behind TamilNet.com, an online newspaper, and also a regular contributor to the *Daily Mirror* newspaper under the pseudonym "Taraki." He also wrote for the Tamil newspaper *Virakesari*. He was considered an expert on the political and military aspects of the Sri Lankan civil conflict. He lectured on the subject to audiences in Sri Lanka and the West, including the US State Department and international "Think Tanks." On a personal level Mr. Sivaram had a good rapport with a wide cross-section of Sri Lankan civil society.

Sadly, the murder of Mr. Sivaram is not an aberration; it is consistent with a long history of state-sponsored murders of journalists and political opponents, the victimization and ethnic cleansing of minority ethnic Tamils and a general contempt for freedom, democracy and the rule of law which has become the norm for Sri-Lanka.

The exact identity of the perpetrators of this act are not known, yet we hold the Government of Sri Lanka accountable for this brutal murder based on the circumstances; he was abducted on a busy public street in the Capital next to a police station; his body was discovered in a high security area, only 500 meters from the country's parliament; there have been several recent unsolved murders of ethnic Tamil journalists and political leaders; the government continues to sponsor and protect armed anti-Tamil paramilitary groups in violation of the cease-fire agreement and democratic norms; and continued military harassment of Tamil civilians.

We, the united Tamil community in the US, call upon the International Community to take all appropriate measures to protect the citizens of Sri Lanka and to hold its government accountable for its unlawful and anti-democratic actions.

Ilankai Tamil Sangam, New York
Federation of Tamil Associations of North America (FeTNA)
World Tamil Coordinating Committee – USA. New York
World Tamil Women Organization, Maryland
Midwest Tamil Sangam, Illinois
Sri Lanka Tamil Association of Ohio
Ilankai Tamil Sangam - Vancouver-Portland
North Carolinians For Peace, North Carolina
Ilankai Tamil Sangam – Houston
Tamil Welfare and Human Rights Committee, Washington D.C.
Ilankai Tamil Sangam – Washington
Ilankai Tamil Sangam – Dallas

NESOHR is Horrified and Appalled by the Murder of Well-known Journalist Sivaram

NORTH EAST SECRETARIAT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS - NESOHR

A9 Road Karadippokku, Kilinochchi | nesohr@hotmail.com | Tel: 94 (0) 21 228 5986

29th April, 2005

Press Release

NESOHR is Horrified and Appalled by the Murder of Well-Known Journalist Sivaram

The abduction and murder of well known journalist Dhramaratnam Sivaram in the capital city Colombo on Thursday April 29th 2005 is yet another blow to the non-existing press freedom in Sri Lanka and yet another nail in the coffin of the dying democracy in Sri Lanka. It is a telling symbolism that Sivaram was abducted in front of a police station in Colombo and his body was found only 500 meters behind the parliamentary complex.

Sivaram joins the long list of outstanding journalists who are said to have been murdered by forces close to the ruling class of the Sri Lankan polity. NESOHR wants to point out that none of the cases of murders of journalists in Sri Lanka for the past two decades have been solved. This is an indictment of the government and the police force.

Sivaram's analysis of the political situation in Sri Lanka is keenly read by all, including international readers who follow the Sri Lankan situation with interest. His absence will leave a vacuum for reports of this type.

In the past Sivaram has received many threats for his insightful analysis. Twice last year scores of Sri Lankan police raided his home on the pretext of searching for weapons. It is believed that these raids were intended as a warning to him to stop his writing. At that time Reporters without Borders (RSF), in their statement, said that they are worried about Sivaram's safety. In 2001, Sivaram and another fellow journalist were attacked with clubs in Batticaloa and Sivaram was hospitalized. That attack was also blamed on persons connected with the security forces.

The murder of BBC journalist Mylvaganam Nimalrajan in 2000 in Jaffna and the well-known Tamil journalist G Nadesan in Batticaloa in 2004 have also been blamed on forces close to the government.

NESOHR joins the human rights community and those who value press freedom in condemning the abduction and murder of Sivaram.

Fr M X Karunaratnam, Chairperson

A Statement by the Asian Human Rights Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 3, 2005
AS-47-2005

Murder of Sri Lankan journalist exposes government inability to address assassinations aimed at causing instability

This April 28, 46-year-old Sivaram Dharmeratnam became the latest victim of abduction and murder in Sri Lanka. Sivaram, a highly-respected journalist for the Daily Mirror newspaper--where he was known by his pen name, Taraki--was abducted while coming out of a restaurant in front of the busy Bambalapitiya Police station. The perpetrators allegedly parked their vehicle at the station's boundary wall. They dumped his gagged and shot body within sight of the parliament complex, in the heart of the capital. His killing prompted the promise of a prompt and thorough inquiry by the government and many expressions of serious concern by journalists and others.

This is the latest in a series of killings that the Sri Lankan government has proven unable to address due to its historical ambivalence to such murders. Assassination became an express part of government policy in the early 1980s. The period of terror that followed ended only with the
political defeat of the incumbent government. The explicit use of the police and armed forces as political killers ended, yet there were no attempts to address the effects of this time. In fact, the condoning of limited assassinations has continued from time to time. Coupled with the inability of the state to improve the law and order situation, this has contributed to an environment in which anyone can get away with murder.

Today, the security of no Sri Lankan citizen is reasonably guaranteed. As the victim of the latest attack was also sympathetic to the militant Tamil viewpoint, and on the editorial board of a prominent website espousing this position, his assassination will be attributed to retaliation against the backdrop of persistent violence in the north and east. However, assassination is carried out with ease against any target in the country, and the government has been incapable of doing anything about it. This was evidenced in November 2004 with the killing of a High Court judge, allegedly on the orders of a man he was trying in court. There was also the killing of a torture victim who was due to give evidence of his torture in court against a group of police officers who were allegedly behind the murder. Although the shock generated by these two events led to speedy investigations and arrests of suspects, nothing has been done since to address the deteriorating rule of law in Sri Lanka. As a result, the first months of 2005 have witnessed many killings of alleged criminals around the country, many allegedly while fleeing custody. These killings also speak to the tacit approval of murder as a means to deal with somehow undesirable persons in Sri Lanka. Even the U.N. Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions has in the last year expressed a wish to visit in order to investigate and report on the situation.

While it is convenient to attribute killings to the persistent bloodshed in the north and east of Sri Lanka, this will in no way help to pull the country back from its slide towards anarchy. Even the emissaries from Norway and others working on the peace process have given too little regard to the effect that several decades of violence have had on all of Sri Lanka. However, no lasting solution to the conflict in the north and east will be found without due consideration to the exceptional collapse of the rule of law across the country as a whole.

With local and international concern being expressed over Sivaram Dharmeratnam's death, it is time for sober and sane reflection on the collapsed rule of law in Sri Lanka. The Asian Human Rights Commission again warns that until this central issue receives the attention it deserves, talk about bringing stability to the country will mean little, and the assassinations will continue.

Karen Parker J.D.

International Educational Development - Humanitarian Law Project

Dear Friends.

While Memorial Day is traditionally spent honoring soldiers who died in the defense of our country, it is fitting that we honor today a soldier of truth, Mr. Dharmeratnam Sivaran, known as "Taraki." As we all know, Taraki was a journalist who spearheaded Tamilnet, writing with a keen sense of passion for the Tamil people and covering the long war to defend Tamil rights. Taraki was brutally murdered to silence his compelling voice -- a voice that spoke clearly of injustice and clearly of a future in which all peoples of Sri Lanka could thrive together.

To my Sinhala friends I ask you to reflect sincerely on what you gain by supporting policies and persons that seek to annihilate the Tamil people, their culture, their language and voices such as that of Taraki. Many of you work hard, out of love, to save threatened animals, fish and plants from extinction, yet you support policies based on sheer hate towards the humans who share with you the island of Ceylon. If you are unable to embrace the Tamil people as equals and to create a Sri Lanka that truly reflects, in all aspects, the full realization of human rights for both Sinhala and Tamil, then you must let the Tamil people separate themselves from you and go their own way apart. Domination of one people over another has never served anyone. You have lost so many of your children, sent to war to kill your brother and sister Tamils. Why would you do this, when all you receive is more misery. Imagine for a minute what your government could have provided for all of the people of Sri Lanka if it had not spend most of its money on its war machine against the Tamil people.

To the American public I ask that you educate yourselves about the situation in Sri Lanka, especially about the United States' nefarious interests that have played a role in this long tragedy, of which the assassination of Taraki is an example. Your government has spent your tax dollars, ever expanding its military and seeking now military bases in Sri Lanka and elsewhere. Do you want your sons and daughters to die so that the Sinhala government can continue to oppress the Tamil people? Do you want thousands of Tamils to die so that you can have a military base in Tamil areas?

To my Tamil friends, I can only offer humble condolences knowing that one of your most powerful voices, Taraki, is silenced. So many of you have lost loved ones in your long struggle for peace with justice. It may be that the Sinhala people are not able to accept that they fully must share power and politics with you. If this is so, then, of course, you must go your separate way. No people are expected to give up their rights to another people. As an American, whose country was compelled to fight for its freedom, I can say that the cost is great. But the realization of freedom is worth whatever price. My country has long espoused this, so in this sense your will epitomize the best of America.

To all, I hope that this Memorial Day will be known as the Day when the war in Sri Lanka truly ended, when the American people refused to let their government carry out policies that serve to oppress others, and when there were no more assassinations of journalists whose only aim was to bring us all the truth. We can name this day "Taraki's Day." Please join me in wishing his family our sincere condolences as well as our promise that we will care for them as Taraki cared for us all.

Sivaram

- Margaret Trawick

When one is immersed in grief, one finds it hard to be articulate. And yet the force of one's pain demands action, and sometimes the strongest acts are only words – not empty words of comfort and appeasement, but words of truth, forged in the hottest fire. It hurts to let such words take form in one's heart and it hurts still more to force them out into the world. But sometimes one has no choice. Those burning words grow, and demand release.

So it has been with me these last few weeks, and so it must have been with Sivaram for years and years: his anger and pain at what had become of his country had grown so great that he had no choice but to force the words out, the burning shining, hard and sharp words of terrible truth, day after day, month after month, even though toward the end he knew that the very act of speaking the truth would almost certainly lead to his death.

To me, Sivaram was the best of Sri Lanka, and more than the best. Now he has been killed by the ghouls that rule that country, and all of us who valued him, through our weakness, our business with other things, made space for the ghouls to do their work. Now we are weeping and they are laughing.

Very few of those born human live up to the privilege bestowed upon them by the mere fact of being born human. Sivaram was one of those very few.

He will not go to Heaven as he did not believe in such things, and anyway he would be bored in Heaven. Somehow, perhaps, he may be reborn on the fraught island he called home, so that he can keep on fighting for the freedom and well-being of the place and the people he loved. But more likely, he is gone forever.

The LTTE did not protect Sivaram. Those ghouls who say that he was an "LTTE terrorist" wallow in their blindness. Sivaram was not a terrorist. The LTTE are not terrorists and Sivaram did not belong to the LTTE. He could not be a war-maker because he trusted everybody. He talked with everybody. He wore no armor and neither carried nor kept any weapons. And the head of the LTTE was right to confer upon Sivaram, posthumously, the title of Maamanithar. I only wish they had protected him better during his life. Because, despite what the ghouls may say, the LTTE in no way benefits from the death of Sivaram. He was their best international advocate. Alas that he could only be their most credible advocate by not being dependent on them for protection or anything else. The people of other countries believed what he said for two reasons: first because he was clearly not protected by, nor a "mouthpiece" for, the LTTE; and second, because he spoke with knowledge and intelligence. He spoke the truth. Anybody could see that except the ghouls. And now he is gone. Nobody can possibly replace him.

To say that Sivaram was a Maamanithar, "a Great Man", or more precisely translating from Tamil, a "great human being (not specifying for gender)" – what does that mean?

Everybody knows that Sivaram was brilliant, and if they did not know it before, they know now that he was tremendously brave. He was great for these reasons. But there are additional reasons as well.

Some men are "great" at the cost of others. Their families may pay the price of their greatness in the public eye, or their employees, or their servants, or their private armies. But Sivaram had no employees, servants, or armies. He had only his wife and children and his friends, some of the latter true, and others perhaps not so true. Sivaram tried his best to protect his family from the political horrors and turmoil surrounding him. He enabled his children to grow with freedom of mind and spirit. He did not try to tell them what to think, how to dress, how to behave. He gave them the best education he possibly could. He should have sent them abroad for their own protection. They would not have such a separation. Sivaram had to earn for them, for their meals, for their schooling. They lived in a humble house. They traveled back and forth between Batticaloa and Colombo by bus. Sivaram could only go abroad if others paid for his airplane ticket. He was able to take his daughters with him overseas, once, and show them the capital cities of Europe. His beautiful and courageous wife and his irrepressible young son are bodily frail, and long travel for them would be dangerous. If they were rich, they could fly first class. They could have medical insurance. But neither Sivaram nor any of his family or close friends are rich. He did not, could not sell out. Opportunities existed for him to sell his mind, make himself a propagandist for some

wealthy interests, but it was not in him to do such a thing. Those who call him a "propagandist" are clueless at best.

Sivaram was funny and self-deprecating but he also challenged everybody. He did not let anyone be complacent with what they were or what they had already done. He laughed at us anthropologists with our "native informants," which he would never let himself be one of. He even challenged Stanley Tambiah when he met him, saying of Tambiah's celebrated book Buddhism Betrayed, "Professor, this is the worst book you've ever written." Tambiah is also a great man, and he took Sivaram's criticism gently.

Sivaram came to the view that Sinhala chauvinists can never be made to change their minds. He reached this conclusion after many years of trying, and still to the end he was trying. Intelligent people listen to criticism, evaluate it, take it on board if it makes sense, and act to make themselves stronger and better thereby. Sivaram made many people stronger and better through his pointed, right-on-the-mark criticisms. He made me stronger and better. He made the leadership of the LTTE stronger and better. He could even have made the JVP, and the Sinhala Buddhist clergy stronger and better, if they had really listened to him. But those of them who have ears to hear and eyes to read are ghouls, and their minds are different from ours. Sivaram advised us to learn to comprehend the Sinhala chauvinist mind if we are ever to make any headway in reasoning with them. Sorry but I do not have the stomach for this. Anyway, if Sivaram cannot do it, who can? And is there even a mind at all in any of those ghouls - a mind that human beings can comprehend? Is there a heart?



I weep for Sivaram

Rev. Fr. Dr. S.J.Emmanuel
Germany

For the last ten years, this young talented and outspoken man impressed me by his deep insights into political developments, expert analysis of military moves and the simple language with which he presented them at the international conferences. Above all he touched me by his simplicity and friendship. During the sessions and workshops he would take a clear and convinced stance for a noble cause and will hold the audiences spell bound with his deep insights and expert analysis. And in the evenings he will relax with all without any partisan attitude or preferences, mingling with all and narrating interesting incidents for laughter, better digestion and good sleep. Behind this dark and spectacled man was a wealth of information, insights and intellectual talents, the power of which was radiating a warmth and humanness which none of us could resist.

At the end of an all-day listening and discussions, it used to be a light laughing session around Sivaram, tease or pull one-another's legs and laugh our differences out before the next working day. My memory is full of long hours spent with him in many capitals of the world. The last one was in Dec.2004 in New Jersey. He did a masterly analysis of the military strategies in the South East Asian Region, at a Seminar at Rutgers University, New Jersey. Traveling with him and Mr. Adaikalanathan the TNA-MP for Mannar, the following day from New Jersey to New York, I made a little compliment to Siva about his deep and quick insights of the previous day. His answer was a quick one of humility and simplicity. He laughed at me "Father -I am only a simple fellow clicking information out of a computer and putting them together" (Even when his laptop full of information he collected and writings he had done, was stolen at the Zurich Railway Station, he remained calm). He was unique in combining his highly intellectual talents with touching simplicity and humanness.

Being a man committed to the Truth and committed to a people and land, he showed a prophetic courage in calling a spade a spade and thereby warning his beloved people not to fall prey to the attractive proposals and promises of the Sinhala Regiment nor to the sinister moves of the international community. He warned us Tamils of the danger of getting caught in the International Security Net that all the Sinhala political parties were laying down to overpower the Tamil Struggle. Similarly he warned us of the high profile visits of western leaders to Wanni in embedding the LTTE leadership into their international diplomatic net and imposing a solution favourable to their interests. Even the euphoria attached to the Norwegian and Japanese visits must not lull us into complacency and inaction.

He saw the consequences of three non-events which have lulled the victimized people into a state of false peace and satisfaction. The prolonged Cease-Fire, the absence of Talks and non-delivery of aid for the Tsunami victims are non-events which have disappointed and lulled the majority of us into a political inactivity. Only a few are still awake and actively protesting against the mounting injustices and crimes of the government against the Tamil people.

He appeared in our midst at a critical and decisive period of our struggle.
In spite of having truth and justice on our side, there were not enough defenders, communicators and journalists. The intellectuals and professionals most of whom have migrated into the western world for greener pastures were often playing for safety and hesitated to identify themselves with the non-traditional, young and Tamil-speaking leadership. They were most of the time behind the cadjan fences, rejoicing probably at some victories, but never dared to take up the cause of the Tamils or come out into the open in defence of those suffering injustice. Some of them distanced themselves to hide their lack of courage for truth and justice and carried deceptive labels like cosmopolitan, Sri Lankan, neutral, etc. But Sivaram, coming out of a wealthy and educated family, rubbed shoulders with the youthful leadership and stood courageously before the world in defence of us all.

While proclaiming to the world a pious intention of peace for the country and justice to the Tamils, the Government has now started to fight a shadow war against the Tamils. Not content with the open support of betrayers of the Tamil cause, it has stooped very low in the form of snake in grass, to cause unrests, murders, bomb attacks against the political presence of the LTTE using the Karuna faction and the Sinhala extremists.

It is at this juncture when we need a man of the caliber of Sivaram of the Eastern province to be our expert analyst and courageous prophet. Hence his disappearance from our midst, leaves an irreplaceable vacancy

We Tamils proudly owned a Kumar, a Nimalrajan and a Sivaram. All these have been snatched away by the evil forces. May the Gods hasten the triumph of Truth and Justice. Till then let us be courageous and stand for the values he stood for.

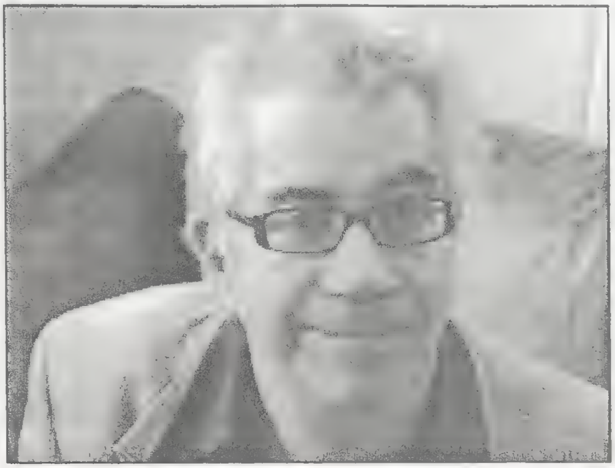


The man who knew too much is dead

Professor Tom Plate,

Director of Asia Pacific Media Network, University of California

"The brave Sivaram, at the age of 46, is with us no more. The mean and mediocre remain; the outstanding are dealt death by evil. The internationally acclaimed journalist was murdered"



The famous journalist from South Asia sat there at the cafe table on the sun-splashed dock of the Ritz-Carleton Hotel in Marina Del Rey, California, some weeks ago with a look of hard anger in his eyes. It was the kind of anger that the pressures of life pound into a kind of fierce diamond of personality. The anger cannot be scoffed off with kindly thoughts or charm or witty banter.

Well, I am a journalist myself – have been for decades; but I have not in very long time met a journalist as quietly angry, as deeply weathered and as thoroughly philosophical in an almost religious way as this hardened but caring man. If I may be permitted this analogy, he reminded me of an Asian Albert Camus, the legendary literary figure who cared so passionately about his eternally messed up but transcendent France.

A prolific writer and keen observer of his beloved but deeply troubled Sri Lanka, Dharmeratnam Sivaram was uncompromising, prescient and sometimes easily irritated. I riled him a bit with my lame (he thought) proposals for ending the troubles of his country. Sri Lanka, for decades has been enmeshed in a bloody civil war and is now trying to get back on its feet after the devastating tsunami of last December.

Don't you understand what's happening (his eyes and signs seemed to be saying) as I blithely proposed my Canadian-like solution for the divided land of Sri Lanka – that is, a measure of self-governance for the minority Tamils in the island-nation's northeast, not unlike the deal for the minority French-Canadians. Don't you understand, he seemed to be saying: There are right-wing elements of the ruling government in Colombo that don't want a settlement, they don't want Tamils to have equality, they want some of us dead.

His last published commentary – fiery and in-your-face – reflected his Machiavellian abhorrence of _ but also fearsome respect for _ the evil political and anti-humanitarian spirits swirling over and through his otherwise beautiful land. "Don't raise false hopes amongst our people," he bluntly wrote, scoffing at the well-intentioned efforts of Norwegian Special Peace Envoy Eric Solheim to mediate between the country's long-warring factions. He gently chastised the peace envoy for his naivete and fiercely lambasted the central government for its inherent and unrelenting bad faith.

Wrote this brave journalist: "People of the north and east remain without economic growth or jobs. Scars of the war remain. Thousands of people who have lost their homes, land and whole villages to the Sri Lanka armed forces still live in desperation....."

The brave Sivaram, at the age of 46, is with us no more. The mean and mediocre remain; the outstanding are dealt death by evil. The internationally acclaimed journalist was murdered.

Late last month, late at night, Sivaram was set upon by a quartet of assassins and shoved into a waiting vehicle. This did not happen in some remote mountain village. This happened in the heart of Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, the island nation of more than 20 million off the southern coast of India.

They did not find his body until morning. The martyr for peace, reconciliation and press freedom was found by the side of a marsh, not far from the country's parliament. At the scene was a spent cartridge from the 9 mm pistol used to kill him and the napkin used to gag him.

The anguish felt worldwide perhaps surprised the morally suspect government of President Chandrika Kumaratunga. Her parliamentary coalition includes a right-wing party, some of whose prominent followers include types that might arguably be characterized as little more than thugs – and whose views on the minority Tamils are neither subtle nor secret.

Many organizations have filed their official condolences and lodged their heartfelt outrage. But no one has so far been more eloquent and more direct than the ordinarily self-effacing Akio Suda, the ambassador of the government of Japan, a country so frustrated that its sincere and long-standing efforts to help Sri Lanka escape its murderous past have achieved so relatively little.

"I was shocked and extremely disturbed by the news of the abduction and killing....," he said in a formal diplomatic and media statement. "Whatever be the background of the perpetrators, such a heinous act should not be tolerated. Freedom of speech is the very basic component of a democratic society and should be upheld and respected....This murder...must not be ignored by those who advocate peace and democracy. I vehemently condemn this dastardly act of the murder of Mr. Sivaram...."

Then, the distinguished diplomat closed on a note of optimism. Suda said that "such despicable acts" will not hinder the efforts of promoting the peace process in Sri Lanka."

That's the noble hope, to be sure; and that's what diplomats are for – to offer a peaceful process and the hope of no more war. But it is not hard to imagine the look on the face of the ghost of Sivaram; the look would suggest that hindering peace and promoting war was indeed the very intent of his assassination; and that, more likely than not, this is what will ensue from it.

Unassuming greatness, unforgettable charm

Professor Karthigesu Sivathamby

Looking at the responses evoked by Sivaram's death, I wonder whether I could indeed claim to be someone close to him in terms of journalistic experience. The fact that many journalists and writers of distinction have so courageously agreed to identify themselves with him personally, despite political differences, leaves me rather bewildered.

Sivaram was close to me and my family. He was so close that each member of my family deeply and sincerely feels his absence and genuinely mourns his death. I am afraid that it is the professional and human faces of Sivaram that are going to be missed by colleagues, acquaintances and fellow-professionals, which very rightly highlighted his commitment to Tamil nationalism and more than that, his expertise in communicating it to, very often, unreceptive readers.

Before dwelling on the personal side of his life, it is important to locate Sivaram and his contribution as a journalist who stood for and advocated Tamil nationalism. It was the late Mervyn de Silva who first assessed the importance of Sivaram's contributions as a journalist. Taraki (the pen name of Sivaram), remarked de Silva, brought to Sri Lankan English journalism a new depth and vision in writing about Tamil militant youth.

Sivaram brought out in clear, unambiguous terms, what the Tamil militants demanded. He highlighted in his writings how they had organised themselves militarily, which led to the Sri Lankan security forces having to accept a number of strategic and battlefront reversals by 1990. His writing opened the door for the non-Tamil reader to get a glimpse of the single-minded devotion with which the militants were demanding a more just, equitable and dignified place for Sri Lankan Tamils, either within or outside the polity.

Sivaram's presentations commanded attention in the manner in which they highlighted the Tamil struggle. He did not wish to contextualise it in terms of the ahimsa tradition of S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, the bellicose rhetoric of G. G. Ponnambalam, or Sir P. Ramanathan's Hindu aristocracy. Sivaram traced the causes of militancy to the martial traditions of the Tamils, evidence for which exists in pre-colonial Tamil literature since the 'Purananuru.' He was especially interested in military castes and tribes, which British colonial governments dubbed as criminal tribes. His series of articles on Tamil militarism in the 'Lanka Guardian' opened more Tamil eyes than non-Tamils ones about the cultural roots of contemporary Tamil armed nationalism.

Equally important as his elucidation of the part played by militancy in taking forward the Tamil struggle, was his reading of Tamil politics, which present him as a writer with a Tamil worldview. Sivaram was rooted firmly in the Batticaloa tradition, of which he was very proud, but also saw Sri Lankan Tamil nationalism as something overarching and encompassing all Tamils whether from Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Amparai, Vanni, Jaffna or Mannar. The manner in which he presented the Tamil cause drew the attention not only of the Sri Lankan establishment but also of countries interested and involved in Sri Lanka's politics. This made Sivaram a perambulating journalist than one confined to the armchair or well heeled beats in Colombo.

Perhaps Sivaram's most enduring contribution to journalism was TamilNet, the website which he founded and ran very efficiently. With the Tamil diaspora ever keen to know minute-by-minute developments in Sri Lanka, TamilNet became an immediate success. Sivaram's professional expertise automatically made the worldwide web an appropriate medium to report the Tamil nationalist struggle with the LTTE at its very forefront.

Sivaram was also a stickler for the appropriate word when composing his journalistic pieces and was known for his unusual combination of words and sentence structures, which provoked debate. He was a highly accomplished bilingual writer (Tamil and English).

The greatness of Sivaram as a journalist lay in the fact that he was able to be all these, while also being highly professional about them. He was so professional that every professional in the field loved him for the commitment, the expertise and, especially, the nicety with which he performed his tasks. Had it not been for this trait of professional brilliance coupled with human warmth, it would never have been possible for a Sri Lankan Tamil journalist to be a friend of Gamini Weerakoon and Rajpal Abeynayake; Dayan Jayatilleke and Ajith Samaranayake.

With all intellectual humility and genuineness it could be said that no other Tamil journalist, or a journalist who is a Tamil, could have achieved such heights in so many different fields. It is in this sense Sivaram becomes an exemplar Tamil journalist – the man who could be friend of both the Pentagon and South Block.

But to say he was this and this alone, even though such conquests appear more than what a single individual could achieve, is far, far from the truth. There was also a deeper Sivaram – Sivaram the keen student of Tamil history and culture incorporating fields as diverse as politics and anthropology, economics and cultural studies, linguistics and literary criticism. He was aware of the work the anthropologist Dennis McGilvray had undertaken in Sri Lanka's east, and in touch with American scholars such as Margaret Trewick, who is interested in Tamil studies. But the same time he was also delving into Sri Lanka's history and the interdependence between the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities. He was well read in Tamil Buddhism, especially on how Tamil Nadu played such an important role in shaping Sri Lankan Buddhist traditions.

It was Sivaram's interest in the foregoing, which brought him to me. To me in the early 1990s, travelling to Colombo from Jaffna every month on relief and rehabilitation matters, acquaintance with Taraki was a great asset. It was something more than I could hope for. Through conversations with him I got to know what was happening – who was doing what, where and how. Sivaram always chided me for my 'involvement' in matters political. When he found that I was going beyond the intellectual need to study problems facing the Tamil people, becoming involved in Citizen Committee politics and rehabilitation matters, he urged me very firmly to get back to my research work, which, it is true, I had abandoned by 1984. It was Sivaram's efforts that made me feel I should get back in a more committed way to academia.

Sivaram was a great interlocutor. He could find out everything that lay in a person. Answering his questions, one was prone to feel one's own inadequacy rather than one's authority. Above all, replying him meant being well versed in state of the art. It was in the course of these interactions that I found that Sivaram's strength lay in his intimate acquaintance with Tamil history. This made him write and speak not only with dedication but also with authority.

These intellectual interactions also made us discover each other's idiosyncrasies. In Sivaram's case they were not idiosyncrasies either. They were the other side of a very busy person – a man who was a loving husband and a fond father; a man who would not only enjoy good wine, but also better poetry. Further, though he never betrayed such feelings to me personally, I found he treated me like his teacher by avoiding drinking, or smoking his favourite Manila cigars in my presence.

Speaking academic matters with an active journalist like Sivaram demanded an appropriate time. He openly confessed that his office hours were in the evenings when he had drinks

with friends and colleagues. So it was usually in the morning or in the early noon that we sat down for a chat. He thus became a friend of the family. It was at these moments the 'human' side of Sivaram was opened to us. It was then I discovered he was a great connoisseur of good food. From discussing the finer points of Blue Stilton cheese and mellow wine, he could speak about the merits of *puli chatham* and *thayir pachchadi* with not only ease, but also evident relish. Sivaram's wife said he would often speak about the meals he had under our roof. My wife would say it was a pleasure to feed him, while my daughters – especially the younger two – used to debate the relative merits of different recipes – both vegetarian and non-vegetarian.

To Sivaram, the one-time militant who had injured himself, the easy chair *(hansie putoova)* in our overcrowded drawing room was something in which he could rest his back with ease, arms folded behind his head. As he relaxed I came to know that Sivaram the great journalist and globetrotter, was also a very caring and fond father who wanted to take his children out for a good meal and spend more time with his growing son and daughters, as well as a devoted husband concerned about his wife's health. One could also see other emotions running through him, those of self-pity and even self-indignation.

It was also in such moments of domesticity that he would reveal his familiarity with the gossip surrounding Tamil cinema and, even, his enjoyment of very average Tamil films. The songs, lyrics and shots – all attracted him. Very few people know that this busy journalist could steal a few hours to enjoy a popular film. To me it brought out the child in him – the simple son of the Tamil soil.

Sivaram was not a single person. It is true that the great 'Taraki' resided within him, but he was also the researcher who never published his very important findings, alongside which was the very cautious Sivaram who was keener to listen than to speak, and to measure the person in his company before making his own position clear. It was this complex combination that made him who he was.

In a way Sivaram achieved the impossible. His death made Tamil nationalism from east to west and the world over, a household word. How is it that he could invoke within his friends and acquaintances that sense of debt, which made his passing away such a tragic event? Surely, it is not possible for one man to provoke such a universal response?

In my 15 years of knowing him I was always the butt of his criticisms and subject of annoyance for not doing I what I should be doing. Let me now at least confess that there were moments when I imagined he would say something nice about me – a word of praise or a gesture of appreciation. It never came – if at all he scolded me, cajoled me and urged my children to chastise me. But as he closed behind him the door of my flat, his criticism would seem the biggest compliment I could have. Today, my heart is full, but tears inevitably fall.

The Worthy Life of D. Sivaram (1959-2005)

Sachi Sri Kantha

For quantitative evaluation, the creativity of individuals can be scaled under three categories. These are, (1) ample quantity without quality, (2) ample quality without quantity, and (3) ample quality and quantity.

In the field of journalism, where Dharmaretnam Sivaram [aka, Taraki by his *nom de plume*] made his reputation, individuals belonging to the first category – ample quantity without quality - form the majority and I need not mention names. In the fields of poetry and music, those belonging to the second category – ample quality without quantity - are also represented. Among those who enriched Tamil literature, one can cite singer S.G.Kittappa (1905? – 1933) and poet Pattukottai Kalyanasundaram (1930-1959) as belonging to this group. Premature death due to disease, accident, homicide or suicide are the contributing causes for this second category.

Those making their grade in the third category – ample quality and quantity - are the trend-setters who will be remembered by history.

Where does D.Sivaram - whose untimely, tragic death on April 29, 2005 saddened Sri Lankans - contributions fit in the three categories? In my evaluation, Sivaram's journalistic contributions to Tamil welfare in the print media for the past 15 years make him a sure nominee into the third category because he educated the average Tamils on the intricacy of military affairs by his lucid commentaries. However, his murder also places him in a slot in the second category - of ample quality without quantity -, if one thinks of how much Sivaram could have contributed to electronic journalism and the academic literature on Eelam Tamil history, politics and militancy of the 20th century.

One of Sivaram's predecessors among the Tamil literati who belongs to both the second and third categories of the creativity assessment scale was the great poet Subramanya Bharathi (1882-1921).

That Sivaram contributed lucid commentaries representing Eelam Tamil nationalism for the past 15 years is known to all. But, his only major study [to my knowledge, that is] on Tamil militarism appeared as a lengthy eleven part essay in the now defunct *Lanka Guardian* journal edited by Mervyn de Silva, from May to November, 1992. For some reason which I cannot fathom now I have long felt that even that lengthy series was terminated without a proper closure. Maybe Sivaram was distracted by his other professional commitments. Maybe, since 1992 was the year when coverage on the Rajiv Gandhi assassination trial was topical, the page space in the *Lanka Guardian* issues [a slim pages per issue] was at a premium then. Even if that series by Sivaram came to a premature closure, one should give credit that Mervyn de Silva thought it apt to print Sivaram's studious analysis on the vibrancy of Tamil militarism. Here are the individual segments from Sivaram's lengthy study, as it appeared in the *Lanka Guardian* issues at that time.

During its six month 'run', Sivaram's analysis also received critical comments from five *Lanka Guardian* readers, including me. The correspondents and their critical notes appeared as follows:

1. M.Raja Jogananthan: Militarism & caste. *Lanka Guardian*, July 15, 1992, p.16.

2. Sachi Sri Kantha: Prabhakaran's mentors. *Lanka Guardian*, August 1, 1992, p.2.

3. R.B.Diulweva: Martial Tamils. *Lanka Guardian*, September 1, 1992, p.24.

4. C.R.A.Hoole: Tamil military caste. *Lanka Guardian*, September 15, 1992, p.12.

5. T.Vanniasingham: Maravar militarism. *Lanka Guardian*, October 15, 1992, p.21.

In his foot-notes in the series, Sivaram answered two of his critics, namely Raja Jogananthan and Diulweva. Though he did not directly answer to my criticism on the omission of M.G.Ramachandran's (MGR) contributions in the Tamil movies of late 1940s to whole of 1950s, as inspiration for martial talent among young Eelam Tamils in his first three segments of the series, it was evident that Sivaram had accepted and accomodated my criticism and incorporated references to MGR in the published 8th and 11th (and final) segments. This is a note-worthy skill of a sincere scholar. In the 11th segment, Sivaram referred to poet Kannadasan's inspirational lyrics written for MGR in the movie *Mannathi Mannan*;

Achcham enpathu Madamaiyada – Anjaamai Dravidar Udamaiyada

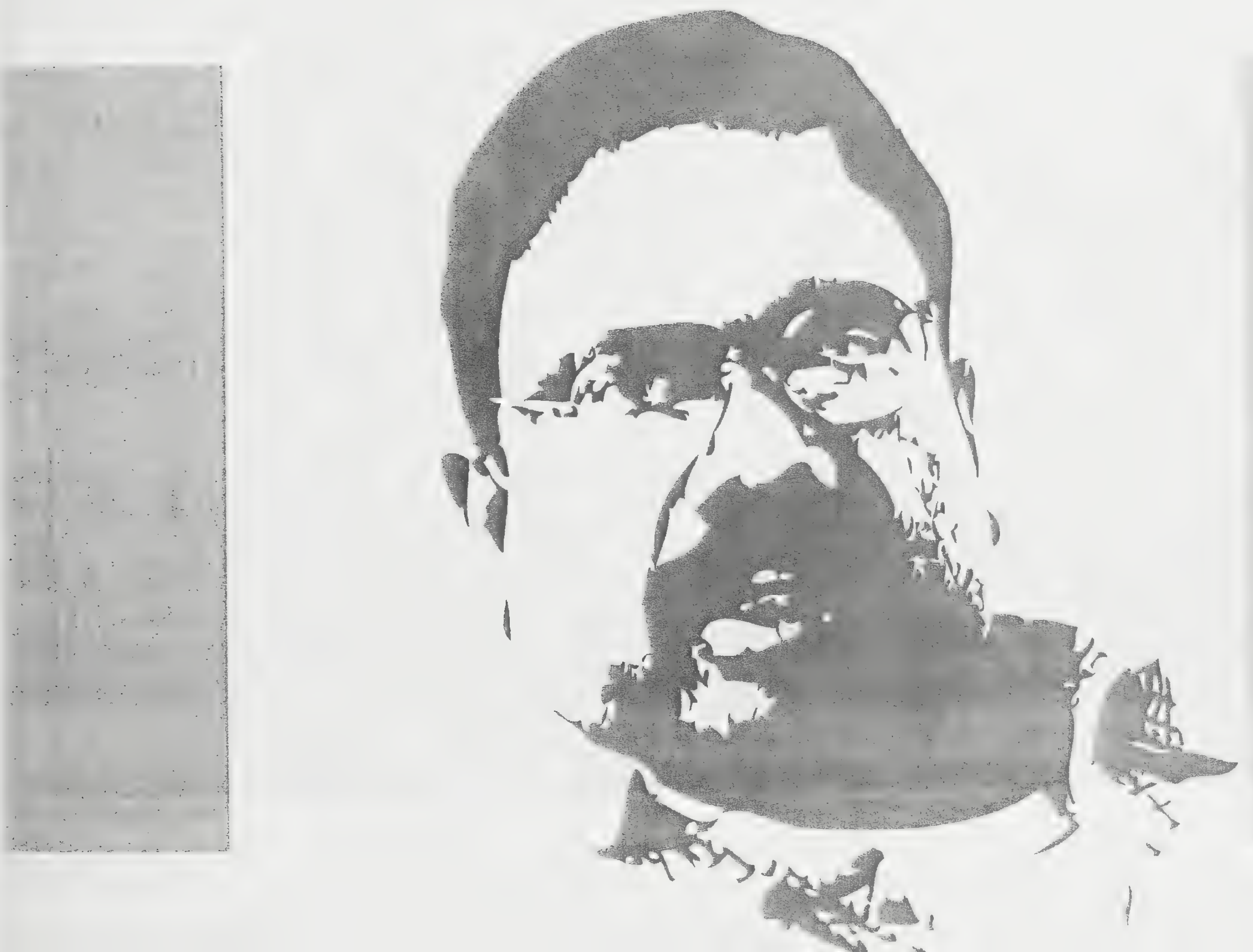
Aarilum Saavu Noorilum Saavu – Thayakam kaapathu Kadamaiyada

In English translation,

"Cowardice is but foolishness – Courage is a trait of Dravidars

Whether death is at six or hundred – Protecting the motherland is a Duty"

Sivaram has proved in life and in his courageous death that he lived to emulate the words penned by poet Kannadasan. This is no mean achievement. To celebrate Sivaram's worthy life, I'll shortly prepare his lengthy essay of 1992 and the comments of the five correspondents on this essay, for the electronic record. He deserves it.



Memory of Sivaram

Dennis B. McGilvray, PhD
Associate Professor of Anthropology
University of Colorado at Boulder

I met Sivaram in 1993 in Colombo, on my first return visit to Sri Lanka after an interval of a decade. My research site, the town of Akkaraipattu on the east coast, was not far from Tirukkovil, where Sivaram's family had owned coconut plantations and where he had childhood memories. Like most everyone who met Sivaram, I was immediately drawn to his intimate knowledge of the political and strategic situation of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, a stream of information that was channeled through the most overworked cellphone in the island.

However, I was delighted to find that Sivaram's interest in me was genuinely academic and scholarly. He read every anthropological article and chapter I wrote about the matrilineal clan (kudi) system of the Batticaloa Tamils and Muslims with more attention to detail than my own university colleagues. He was especially fascinated with my interpretations of the history of the Batticaloa region, based upon what he regarded as my politically naive reading of the Mattakkalappu Manmiyam, an 18th century collection of caste histories, temple honors, and dynastic chronicles that still influences popular Batticaloa Tamil awareness.

Every time I met Sivaram, our conversation would eventually turn to a detailed discussion about the pre-colonial and post-colonial configuration of Tamil castes and temple honors on the east coast. Most recently, he told me he had nearly finished editing a new critical edition of the Mattakkalappu Manmiyam, a scholarly project that I strongly hope can be carried through to publication in his memory. He had also promised to write a historical essay on the Dutch period of Batticaloa history for a historical sourcebook I am editing, and its absence from that volume will be an intellectual loss for all Sri Lanka scholars.

Over the years, Sivaram became a personal friend, visiting my family in Colorado several times, and lecturing to my university classes on one occasion. However, the dimension of Sivaram's life that I would like to emphasize is his passion for history and his fascination with the distinctive cultural and historical traditions of the Batticaloa region. He had a natural aptitude for scholarship and intellectual debate, and I came to think of him as a fellow academic. His death represents not only the painful elimination of a good friend but also the senseless loss of a genuine colleague in the study of Sri Lankan Tamil society.

Taraki's Assassination & Press Freedom

Wakeley Paul Esq,
Attorney-At-Law, New Jersey

The recent assassination of 'Taraki' raises serious questions about press freedom in Sri Lanka. Suppressing opponents of the government can take several forms; brutally killing them is the most unforgivable and unacceptable. The country has had a long and troubled history with press freedom. This incident heightens that reality.

Sinhalese governments have always inclined toward the refractive analyses of facts, bent to suit their readers. That is fine, so long as they can also tolerate and listen to such stern watchdogs as Taraki was of the plight of the Tamil community on the island. He looked into the center of government activity from the Tamil periphery; as we Tamils remained unceasingly pushed away into the corners by the Sinhalese centrists. The government seems to have resented the fact that he presented that perspective with steely conviction.

While the political atmosphere of the island remains unsettled, this incident can only amount to a damaging setback in Tamil - Sinhalese relations. Taraki's assassination can only be described as a terrible political blunder, which would sharply heighten the sense of grievance among the Tamils.

The President and her henchman may not care. They may even view this assassination with a sense of relief; but sharp and critical analyses of their misdeeds will not cease to go unnoticed. We only hope that more assassinations are not their answer.

Sivaram, an articulate intellect

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In the loss of Dharmaratnam Sivaram, we will greatly miss a person of deep committment, articulate intellect, incisive political analysis, and firm loyalty to family, friends, and the place he loved. I last worked with Sivaram in the days immediately after the Tsunami in my office here in Boulder, Colorado. Calls came in on his cell phone throughout the nights -- with the twelve hour time difference -- as we pieced together the immensity of the tragedy and put the information out to the Tamil diaspora on the internet site Tamilnet. As we typed, he was also grieving for his nephew who was pulled into the water from a temple that had been engulfed by the waves.

Sivaram helped me understand the political dimensions of the conflict on the east coast of the island in the beginning of the 1990's, when I was engaged in PhD research in anthropology during those dark years of mass disappearances and village massacres. He relished scholarly discussion and cherished books. Over the years, I learned that his indefatigable intellect would start our meetings on a dozen research trips to Batticaloa with the question, "Did you bring any good books?" He delved into social theory, ethnographic texts, and historical records, and could remember the page numbers of key points he wished to recall. In Batticaloa District, people could not yet believe what was happening to them at the time when Sivaram's Mother suggested that we meet and talk about local political conditions and the various gun-carrying groups in the villages where families' were hosting me. Media censorship and government erasure of violent events on the east coast led Sivaram to establish Tamilnet in the coming years.

He loved the eastern coastal region, especially certain places like Tirukovil, which was connected to his family history. He knew every village and hamlet of Paduvankarai as well as the history of the people. His mother was stately and courageous in character. She also was a wonderful at telling stories. Sivaram remembered his father's sense of loyalty with admiration. Sivaram was committed to the well-being of his immediate and extended family members. He had a strong wish that the children would receive the best education possible.

He was constantly in demand for political discussions, though he had little time for those who were not sincerely engaged in making a difference in the lives of the Tamil people because he was completely devoted to this end. Sivaram evaluated and anticipated political shifts on local, national, and international levels by traveling into the scrub jungle of the Tamil Homelands and to political forums around the world. Death came very close to Sivaram many times, both in combat and over the years of providing perceptive political analysis for his wide readership. He did not deter from engaging an issue -- such as the impunity of pro-government paramilitaries -- because it endangered him.

I can remember his description of the beauty of the jungle when it blossoms, and the magic of the Batticaloa lagoon when his oar cut through the night water in the full moonlight, creating swirls of glowing phosphorescence. There was also a part of Sivaram that was a poet. He inspired many at home and abroad, living fully and working tirelessly in difficult circumstances for the future of his much loved country.

What others said about Sivaram...



"I was shocked and extremely disturbed by the news of the abduction and killing of a senior journalist Mr. Dharmeratnam Sivaram. I express my heartfelt condolences and sympathy to his bereaved family and friends. Whatever be the background of the perpetrators, such a heinous act should not be tolerated. Freedom of speech is the very basic component of a democratic society and should be upheld and respected by one and all. This murder of Mr. Sivaram, a senior journalist is a blatant attack on democracy and the freedom of speech, and must not be ignored by those who advocate peace and democracy. I vehemently condemn this dastardly act of the murder of Mr. Sivaram and wish to state that such despicable acts will not hinder the efforts of promoting the peace process in Sri Lanka."
Ambassador of Japan Mr. Akio Suda

"Sivaram, was a brilliant journalist"
Reporters Sans Frontières (Reporters Without Borders)

Mr Dharmeratnam Sivaram is a courageous writer who was able to fearlessly express his opinions and present news stories even in difficult circumstances. Forces that cannot stand up to his resoluteness, his firm conviction on issues, and depth and brilliance in broad range of skills, have abducted and murdered him to silence his voice.
Political Wing of the Liberation Tigers

"This audacious and brutal crime is an attack on free speech in Sri Lanka,"
Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) Executive Director Ann Cooper

"Yes, he was a Tamil patriot. [But] in a field laden with hyperbole and zeal, Taraki's writing compelled prevailing understandings to be questioned rather than simply foist his own views on readers. His death will sadden those on all sides prepared to listen to rational, even if contrary, arguments,"
Tamil Guardian newspaper

"This shameful crime has led to a great loss for Sri Lankan journalism and for UNESCO. Mr Sivaram had worked with us on the creation of the Media Resource and Training Center, MRTC, in Jaffna in the North of Sri Lanka. It is tragic that I have to make this condemnation today, on World Press Freedom Day, which UNESCO is celebrating in Dakar this year,"
UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura

"inspiration to Tamil journalists with love for the nation and their people. Dharmaretnam Sivaram has demonstrated that a journalist can serve his people to the extent that he can be hailed their 'Great Human Being'. Sivaram didn't raise his voice for Tamil nationalism while living in the safety of a foreign country or away from government controlled areas of this island. He didn't hide away, working secretly or hiding behind the anonymity of the Internet. Neither did he espouse his views only to the Tamil people, in their language; Sivaram also wrote of views in English with unrivalled clarity
Popular Jaffna Tamil daily, Uthayan

Sivaram was a powerful bi-lingual journalist. Sivaram, popularly known as Taraki, remained a committed democrat, using his voice to defend human rights, and using his pen to defend the rights of the Tamils to self respect and self determination.
The International Federation of Tamils

Using Taraki as his pen name, Sivaram contributed immensely to the contemporary political and military issues in the country. His thorough analytical reports were well received and read widely through out Sri Lanka and abroad.
Sri Lanka Tamil Media Alliance (SLTA)



"I am so distressed by this. I knew Sivaram as one of the best political analysts in Sri Lanka, and someone who valued and defended his independence of thought and action. Sri Lanka and the Tamil community need people like him. His loss is a true tragedy, and whoever killed him has done great harm to the country and the community,"
Teresita Schaffer former Ambassador of the United States to Sri Lanka.

She is currently Director for South Asia, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC, USA.

Mr. Dhramaratnam Sivaram, the well known Tamil journalist whose bold and accurate portrayal of the Sri Lankan political establishment has embarrassed and damaged its reputation.
Australian Federation of Tamil Associations

"Vehemently condemns the killing of journalist, D.Sivaram. He was simply exercising his right to report freely on current affairs. To gun down an unarmed man is pure cowardice; to gun down a journalist is to attack freedom of speech"
Simon Gardner, Foreign Correspondents' Association of Sri Lanka

says that "This is a shocking, tragic and senseless killing of a prominent and distinguished commentator who was a leading voice of the Tamil minority"
Aidan White, General Secretary of The International Federation of Journalists

They Can Take Sivaram Away From Us...

Can They Extinguish the Fire of Tamil Nationalism He Ignited in Our Hearts?

Dr. Victor Rajakulendran, Sydney, Australia

For the last few days we all have been battling to come to terms with the fact that "Mamanithar" Sivaram Dharmeratnam is no more with us. But when we all read more and more details about the events leading to his murder, our resolve to expose those who try to silence the voice of freedom by threats and intimidation gets only stronger and stronger.

I have been reading Sivaram's contributions to the media from the time he started writing under the pen name "Taraki" in *"The Island"* newspaper published out of Colombo, Sri Lanka. In those days when the Internet was not there, I used to wait impatiently for the Tuesday of the week to get the Sunday edition of *"The Island"* in Sydney to read his analysis.

In April 2002 Sivaram went to Jaffna with one of my friends along the A9 highway to go through Vanni. During this trip, unexpectedly, he had the unexpected opportunity to meet the Tamil National Leader Velupillai Prabakaran. When my friend returned to his home country, he introduced Sivaram to me for me to use him for my radio interviews. I interviewed Sivaram for the first time for *"Thamil Muzhakkam,"* the Tamil radio in Sydney, Australia on Saturday, April 6, 2002 to share what he found during his trip north with our listeners. The same night I e-mailed him the web link of the interview for him to listen to the interview. The next day I received an acknowledgement from him with a special greeting. I would like to share the pride he showed to me through this "greetings from E. Pass" with as many Tamils around the globe as possible.

I still vividly remember what Sivaram wrote in an analysis in *"The Island"* paper soon after the LTTE's first failed attempt to overrun the Elephant Pass garrison. To prove that he has visited the area before he wrote the analysis, he publicly challenged to the readers to go and check on the wall of a partly ruined Hindu temple in the vicinity, for which he gave the name, where the name "Taraki" is written. This shows the risk he has been taking in gathering information for his analysis.

Sivaram was one of those rare journalists who are intellectuals and well read. His knowledge ranged from Tamil literature to the technical details of military hardware. He was excellent in military as well as political analysis. Through his writings he stimulated political debate, raised a voice for human equality and justice and fearlessly criticised authorities in power whenever they misused the same. He took a lot of risk to bring out the truth about an oppressed people and to tell the world how the authorities in power were misusing their power to oppress these people.

We all knew very well that Sivaram's life was under threat for the last few years. First, he was injured when his newspaper office in Batticaloa was attacked by a Tamil paramilitary group operating under the protection and guidance of the Sri Lankan security forces. Later, twice, the police searched his house in Colombo, allegedly for suspected hidden weapons. The first search was on World Press Freedom Day while he was away in Batticaloa and the second 3 months later. These could be taken only as warnings given by his enemies to silence him.

Sivaram has been exposing the Sri Lankan government's duplicity in dealing with the peace process from its inception. He has exposed more specifically the JVP's desire for capturing power and the way they have been deceiving the poor Singhalese masses. When Karuna revolted against the LTTE, Karuna's schoolmate and former friend Sivaram abandoned him and publicly condemned him for his traitorous adventure. More damage was done to Karuna's reputation when Sivaram exposed the details of the businesses Karuna started in Colombo with the money Karuna collected from the public in the East. Therefore, it is clear that Sivaram had gathered at least 3 different enemies during his recent journalistic career, namely the Sri Lankan security forces, the JVP and the Karuna faction.

Considering the fact that he was abducted just in front of the Bamabalapitya police station in Colombo and within 2 hours Sivaram's body was dumped behind the parliament house building which is guarded

by the security forces as a "high security zone", there is no doubt that the abduction and murder of Sivaram could not have been done without the knowledge/sanction of the law enforcement arm of the Sri Lankan State.

Less than 24 hours before Sivaram was abducted, his last article appeared in the Colombo newspaper, the *"Daily Mirror,"* in which he criticised the JVP's craftiness. When I was reading this article I felt that Sivaram has breached the safety zone the enemies have assigned to him the same way Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam did by publishing his last open letter to President Chandrika Kumarathunga. Mr. Kumar Ponnambalam was a veteran Tamil politician, who used his pen to a limited extent like Sivaram did to declare the truth. Kumar's assassination is alleged to have been masterminded by the Presidential Security Division, another arm of the law enforcement authority of the State.

Sivaram's assassination has been condemned by an array of people ranging from the common, down-to-earth Singhalese journalists to the UNESCO chief. This shows the respect and credibility Sivaram earned through his genuine and high-calibre journalism. The only people who failed to condemn Sivaram's murder are those who belong to the ultra-Singhalese nationalistic parties, the Janatha Vimukthy Peramuna (JVP) and the Sihala Urumaya. Some of these people have even implied that Sivaram should have been locked up a long time back for supporting the LTTE. Others have even called him a terrorist. Some bankrupt journalists have tried to fool themselves by interpreting Sivaram's assassination as a result of the internecine fight among the Tamils themselves. Some have even gone to the extent to interpret it as a warning given by the Tamils to the Tamil National Leader, Velupillai Prbakaran. They are only trying to hide the truth from the public and cover up the misdemeanours of the State security forces. They are trying to equate the killing of an unarmed journalist on a Colombo street to that of a militant Tamil fighter in the troubled east of the country.

Many times when I contacted Sivaram for interviews, I have caught him travelling in areas in the east, which are hot beds of internecine killings. Whenever I raised my concern for his safety in these areas, he did not seem to consider it as a big issue. He was very confident that he knew what he was doing.

Although Sivaram had strong feelings about the lack of development in the east of the country, he was not prepared to embrace regionalism at the expense of Tamil nationalism. He spent a lot of time and energy to explain this to the eastern Tamils when Karuna tried to mislead the eastern Tamils with his newly invented regionalism slogan.

Sivaram took up arms to establish Tamil nationalism and continued his campaign through his pen after he gave up the violent path. He has contributed much more through his pen to this noble cause than he contributed through arms. As a result, he has captured a permanent place in the hearts and minds of the Tamil people living all over the globe. Sivaram, who used the worldwide web for disseminating his ideologies efficiently, will never disappear from the face of this earth, as his killers would have hoped for. Sivaram had a fine mind and, as people often say, his fine mind can never really die. His fine mind can only be reborn. Sivaram's assassination will inspire more Sivarams to appear among those who use the worldwide web for expressing their views. This only could deter the cowardly acts of killers like Sivaram's assassins.

We all will miss Siva when we need explanations for the complex phenomena in Sri Lankan politics in the future. However, we only cannot pick up the telephone and talk to him. We all can, instead, hope a google search would help to find those answers buried in what Siva has already left for us.

Let his soul rest in peace!

மாமனிதர் சிவராம் ஒரு அஞ்சலிக்குறிப்பு

பரணி (பிரான்ஸ்)

சிவராம் தமிழ் பரப்பில் அறிமுகம் தேவையில்லாத மனிதர். ஒவ்வொருவருக்கும் வெவ்வேறு கோணங்களில் அறிமுகமானவர். எனது ஞாபகம் எனக்கு சரியாக துணைபுரிகிறது என்றால் அது 90 களின் நடுப்பகுதி என நினைக்கிறேன். The Island பத்திரிகை ஒன்றை முன்னால் வீசிய என் பால்ய நண்பன் ஒருவன் மூலம் ஒற்றைச் சொல்லில் அறிமுகமானார். அது "துரோகி".பின்னாளில் அவர் மூலம் பல துரோகிகள் அம்பலத்திற்கு வரப்போவதும், அத்தகையவர்களாலேயே அவர் கொல்லப்படப் போவதும் போன்ற செய்திகளை என்னால் அப்போது உணர முடியவில்லை. ஒரு சட்டகத்திற்குள் வைத்து மதிப்பிட முடியாமல் ஒரு புதிராகத்தான் இருந்தார். இறந்த பின்னும் அது தொடர்கிறது....

இதழியல் துறையில் நான் நுழைந்தவுடன் சிவராம் குறித்து கட்டமைத்திருந்த பிம்பம் கொஞ்சம் கொஞ்சமாக கலையத் தொடங்கியது.

என் ஆதர்ஷ புருஷர்களில் ஒருவராக அவர் உருமாறத் தொடங்கினார் - எனது விருப்பு வெறுப்புகளிற்கும் அப்பால்.... ஆனால் அவர் குறித்த மதிப்பீடுகளை காலத்திற்குக் காலம் மாற்றிக்கொண்டே இருந்தேன். நான் மாற்றினேன் என்பதை விட அதற்கான புறச்செயற்பாடுகளில் அவர் ஈடுபடுவது போன்ற தோற்றத்தை ஏற்படுத்திக்கொண்டே இருந்தார் என்பதே உண்மை.

அவர் படுகொலை செய்யப்படுவதற்கு இரண்டு நாட்களுக்கு முன்புகூட சக பத்திரிகை நண்பர்களிடம் அவரது அண்மைய சில கட்டுரைகளைச் சுட்டிக்காட்டி அவரைத் திட்டித் தீர்த்திருந்தேன். இப்பொழுது நினைத்தால் நெஞ்சிற்குள் பந்தாய் அடைத்துக்கொள்கிறது வலியும், துயரமும். சேர்ந்தும் பிரிந்தும் மாறி மாறிப் பயணித்த அந்த எழுத்துப் போராளிக்கும் எனக்குமிடையிலான பயணத்திற்கு முற்றுப்புள்ளி விழுந்துவிட்டது.

நான் சிவராம் அவர்களை பாரிஸ் ஈழமுரசு அலுவலகத்தில் வைத்து 2000 இன் நடுப்பகுதிகளில்தான் முதல் முதலில் சந்தித்தேன். அவரது சிம்மக்குரலும், வசீகரமான பேச்சும் நெடுநாள் பழகிய நண்பர் போன்ற தோழமையும் நான் அவர் குறித்து கட்டமைத்திருந்த கற்பனைகளை மீண்டும் ஒருமுறை தகர்த்தது. அவசர பயணமாக பாரிஸ் வந்திருந்த அவர் அரைமணி நேரத்தில் எம்மிடமிருந்து விடைபெற்றார். அந்தத் தருணத்தில் எனக்கு "சிவராம் காய்ச்சல்" அடிக்கத் தொடங்கியிருந்தது.

ஏற்கனவே ஈழத்தின் மூத்த பத்திரிகையாளர்களான சிவநாயகம், கோபாலரத்தினம் போன்றோர்களுடன் நீண்ட சந்திப்புக்களையும், உரையாடல்களையும் நிகழ்தியிருந்தாலும் கூட அவர்களிடமில்லாத ஏதோ ஒரு வசீகரம் அரை மணிநேரத்தில் என்னை சிவராம் வசம் வீழ்த்தியிருந்தது. அவர்கள் சிவராம் குறித்து சிலாகித்துப் பேசியது கூட காரணமாக இருக்கலாம்.

பின்பு இரண்டொரு தடவை பத்திரிகைப் பணி நிமித்தம் தொலைபேசியினூடாக மட்டுமே அவருடன் உரையாட முடிந்தது. மீண்டும் அண்மையில் பாரிஸ் வந்தபோது ஒருவார காலம் ஈழமுரசு அலுவலகத்திலேயே பெரும்பாலும் இருந்தார். அப்போது தொடர்ச்சியாக நீண்ட நேரம் தனிமையில் அவருடன் உரையாட முடிந்தது. ஆனால் இந்தச் சந்திப்பில் அவருடன் மூர்க்கத்தனமாக முரண்பட்டேன். கருணா விவகாரத்தில் இவரது பங்கு குறித்து ஒரு வதந்தி நிலவியது அனைவரும் அறிந்ததே. என்னை அது கடும் சினத்திற்குள்ளாக்கி இருந்தது.

இலகுவில் அமைந்த சந்தர்ப்பத்தை நழுவவிட நான் தயாராக இல்லை. ஆரம்பத்தில் புளொட் இயக்கத்தில் அவரது செயற்பாடுகள் குறித்தும் ஆங்கிலப் பத்திரிகைகள் ஊடாக அவர் எழுதிய போராட்ட எதிர்ப்பு கட்டுரைகள் குறித்தும் அண்மையில் கருணா விவகாரத்தில் அவரது பங்கு குறித்தும் தொடர்ச்சியான கேள்விகளைத் தூக்கிப் போட்டேன். ஒரு வினாவிற்கான விடையுடன் அவர் நழுவிவிடலாம் என்ற ஐயத்தில் எல்லாச் சந்தேகங்களையும் ஒன்றாகப் போட்டுடைத்தேன்.

தானே தயாரித்த கோப்பி ஒன்றை என்னை நோக்கி நகர்த்திய அவர் நான் கேள்விக்கணைகளைத் தொடுப்பதற்கு முன்பிருந்த அதே முகபாவனையுடன் எந்தவித சலனமுமின்றி அமைதியாக என்னை நோக்கினார்.

"இதில் கருணா விவகாரத்திற்கு மட்டும் பதில் சொல்லலாம் என்று நினைக்கிறேன், மற்றவை அவரவர் பார்வைக்கு உட்பட்டு எந்தவிதமாகவும் வாசித்துக்கொள்ளட்டும்" என்றவர் தொடர்ந்து "ஒரு தவறு செய்தவன் திருந்தக்கூடாது - முடியாது என்று ஏதேனும் நியதி இருக்கிறதா" என்று கேட்டார்.

"நான் எனக்கு சரியென்று பட்டதையே செய்து வந்துள்ளேன். ஆனால் அதைச் சரியென்று என்றைக்கும்

நியாயப்படுத்தப்போவதுமில்லை" என்றார்.

தீர்க்கமான பேச்சும் தெளிவான குரலும் அவர் குறித்த நியாயங்களை என் வசம் கொண்டுவந்து சேர்த்தது. கருணா விவகாரத்தில் தனக்கு எவ்வித பங்கும் இல்லை என்று குறிப்பிட்ட அவர், தான் கிழக்கின் அபிவிருத்தி முன்னேற்றங்கள் குறித்து கருணாவுடன் உரையாடியவற்றையெல்லாம் தவறாகப் புரிந்துகொண்டு கருணா தன்னைத் தொடர்புகொண்டதாக ஒப்புக்கொண்டார். அதைத் தான் நிராகரித்ததன் தொடர்ச்சிதான் "வீரகேசரிக் கடிதம்" என்றும் கூறினார்.

தேசியத்தைச் சிதைக்க நினைக்கும் அன்னிய சக்திகள், தமிழ்த் துரோகிகள், ஜே.வி.பி., கெல உறுமய போன்றவற்றின் மீதான தனது பார்வையை எடுத்துரைத்தார். தெளிவாகவும் தர்க்கமாகவும் அவர் கூறிய முறைமை என்னை வியப்பில் ஆழ்த்தியது. அவருடைய பெயருக்கும், புகழுக்கும் காரணம் அப்போது எனக்கு தெளிவாகப் புரியத்தொடங்கியிருந்தது.

ஒரு உலகப் புகழ்பெற்ற பத்திரிகையாளர் என் போன்றவர்களின் கேள்விகளுக்கு பதில் சொல்லவேண்டிய எந்த அவசியமும் கிடையாது. ஆனால் நின்று நிதானித்து ஆத்திரப்படாமல் பதில் சொன்ன பாங்கு இன்னும் என் கண்முன் நிழலாடுகிறது.

அதுமட்டுமல்ல எனது கட்டுரைகள் சிலவற்றை வாசித்து பாராட்டினார். அதில் எந்தவித முகஸ்துதியும் இல்லை. தமிழீழ விடுதலைப் புலிகளின் பெண்கள் படையணி குறித்து நான் எழுதியிருந்த ஒரு கட்டுரையை எடுத்து அதை ஆழமாய் படித்தார். ஒரு நூலுக்குரிய விடயங்களை ஒரு கட்டுரையாக சுருக்கிவிட்டாய் என்று குறிப்பிட்ட அவர் "ஏன் இதை நீ ஒரு புத்தகமாக வெளியிடலாம்தானே" என்று கேட்டார். அத்தோடு எனக்குச் சில உலகப் பெண்கள் படையணி பற்றிய தகவல்கள், அவை சார்ந்த நூல்கள் இணையத் தளங்கள் என்றொரு பட்டியலையும் எழுதித்தந்தார். வாய் வழியாக மடைதிறந்த வெள்ளம் போல் உலகப் பெண்கள் படையணிகள் பற்றி ஒரு குட்டிச் சொற்பொழிவை நிகழ்த்தினார்.

இறுதியில் நான் கூறினேன், "நீங்கள் சொன்ன கருத்துக்களை வைத்து ஒரு புத்தகம் இல்லை பத்து புத்தகம் போடலாம்போல கிடக்குது" என்று. முடிவில் நான் அதை புத்தகமாக எழுதினால் அதற்கு ஒரு முன்னுரை எழுதித்தருவதாகவும் குறிப்பிட்டார்.

எனது உடல் நடுங்கியது- சத்தியமான வார்த்தைகள். அவர் முன்னுரைக்காகவே எனது புத்தக வேலைகளில் அவசர அவசரமாக ஈடுபடத்தொடங்கி ஓரிரு நாட்களில் அவர் படுகொலை செய்யப்பட்டுவிட்டார்.

ஒரு வாரகாலம் அவர் என்னுடன் பேசிய பல விடயங்களை எழுத்தில் கொண்டுவர முடியாத நிலையிலுள்ளேன். ஏனெனில் பல அந்நிய சக்திகளினதும் தமிழ்த்துரோகிகள் சிலரினதும் உண்மைமுகத்தை அப்பட்டமாகத் தோலுரித்திருந்தார். அவர்களால் தான் எந்த நேரத்திலும் கொல்லப்படலாம் என்பதை உறுதிபடக்கூறினார். தனது கொலை ஒரு கூட்டணி சதியின் மொத்த வடிமாய் இருக்கும் என்பதையும் அழுத்தமாய்க் கூறினார்.

நான் "கருணா இல்லையா?" என்றேன். அவர் சிரித்தபடி "கருணா அம்பு. எய்பவர்கள் இருக்க ஏன் அம்பை நோவான். அந்நிய சக்திகளுக்கும் சிங்கள புலனாய்வுத்துறைக்கும் விலைபோன ஒருவர் சுயமாக எப்படி என்னை கொல்ல முடியும். அவர்கள் பணித்தால் வேண்டுமென்றால் கூடுதல் இன்ட்ரஸ்ட் எடுத்து வந்து என்னை கொல்லலாம். அவ்வளவுதான் மேற்றற். கருணாவை நோகிறதை விட்டு ஒட்டுமொத்தமாக தமிழ்த்துரோக சக்திகள் எல்லோரையும் ஒன்றாக களையெடுக்கிறது பற்றித்தான் நாங்கள் சிந்திக்க வேண்டும்" என்றார். இன்று அவரது படுகொலையில் இலங்கை புலனாய்வுத்துறையினர் அந்நிய சக்திகள் தமிழினத் துரோகிகள் சிங்கள இனவாத சக்திகள் போன்ற பலரது தொடர்புகள் அம்பலத்துக்கு வந்துகொண்டிருப்பதை அவதானிக்க முடிகிறது. சிவராமின் வார்த்தைகள் தீர்க்கதரிசனமாகியிருக்கிறது.

"நான் கொல்லப்பட்டுவிட்டேன் என்றால், நான் தேசியத்திற்காகத்தான் ஆயுதம் ஏந்தினேன்... தேசியத்திற்காகத்தான் பேனா ஏந்தினேன்... தேசியத்திற்காகத்தான் சாவேன்" என்று சிவராம் சொன்னவர் என்று குறிப்பிட்டு கட்டுரை எழுது என்றார். நெஞ்சு கனக்கிறது.

இறுதிவரை அவரை ஒரு அடையாளத்துக்குள் வைத்து மதிப்பிடமுடியவில்லை என்னால். அவர் குறித்த மாறுபட்ட கருத்துக்கள் உலாவந்தபோதும் முரண்பாடான கருத்துக்களை எழுதிவந்த போதும் அவரிடமிருந்து மாறாத ஒன்று தொடர்ச்சியாக அவருடன் பயணித்துக்கொண்டேயிருந்தது. அது "தேசியம்". இன்று தேசியத்தலைவரால் அவர் மாமனிதராக கௌரவிக்கப்பட்டிருப்பதுக்கும் ஒரே காரணம் அதுதான்.

தனது சாவின்மூலம் தமிழ்பேசும் சமூகம் நேசிப்பதற்காய் சிவராம் விட்டுசென்றிருக்கும் ஒற்றைச்சொல்லும் அதுதான்.

Sivaram - Death of a Warrior

by S Sathananthan, May 1, 2005

Mr Dharmaratnam Sivaram's murder is tragic; but it was not unexpected - certainly not by him.He joins the list of heroic Tamil activists who stood up against the moribund Sinhala State in Sri Lanka always ready to pay the highest price. Tamil politician Mr Kumar Ponnambalam was killed in Colombo in 2000; and Tamil journalists Mr Mylvaganam Nimalrajan and Mr G Nadesan were executed in Jaffna (2000) and in Batticaloa (2004).

Mr Sivaram is the most recent victim of the pathological death-squad politics of Sinhala chauvinists.He championed Tamil nationalism. He rose magnificently to that most hazardous task of defending the national rights of Tamils.

What antagonised Sinhala chauvinism most is that Mr Sivaram employed Lenin's dictum to devastating effect. He confined himself to describing what is actually happening; he did not engage in impotent speculations about possibilities.

In this way his writings systematically exposed the hidden agenda of the rabidly anti-Tamil Sinhala State in Sri Lanka.

As before, almost all Tamil observers and analysts are accusing the Sinhala security forces and their vassals, the Tamil paramilitary mercenaries. By extension, they are holding Sinhala President Chandrika Kumaratunga directly responsible for the murder.

To accuse the President and her government is appropriate but it misses the point. The murder was done in a way that would leave no doubt at all as to who carried it out.

Mr Sivaram's body was dumped in the high security zone surrounding the national Parliament. The reason is obvious. If his body were found elsewhere in a location that could not be clearly linked to the security forces then there would be doubts about who perpetrated the crime.

It is precisely to wipe out any doubt whatsoever that his corpse was deliberately placed in the high security zone. The Sinhala State sent a chilling message to all Tamils, that its own Sinhala security forces murdered Mr Sivaram.

The State was not so brazen when it had Ponnambalam, Nimalrajan and Nadesan executed. The modus operandi did not directly point to the Sinhala security forces.

Mr Sivaram's case is different. Here the Sinhala State has delivered a brutal warning to Tamils activists. It is a pure act of State terrorism - to terrorise the Tamil people, to silence critical Tamil opinion.

சிவராமுடன் (தராக்கி) ஒரு நாள்

ம.தனபாலசிங்கம் (அவுஸ்திரேலியா)

ஓயாத அலைகள் - 3 ஓங்கி அடித்த காலம். சிங்கள இராணுவம் தலைதெறிக்க ஓடிய நாட்கள். அந்த நாட்களில் சிவராம் சிட்னியில் தங்கியிருந்தபோது அவரை நேரே சந்திக்கும் வாய்ப்புக் கிடைத்தது.

பகல் பொழுதெல்லாம் கூட்டம், அவரது உறவினர் வீடு ஒன்றிற்கு அழைத்துச் சென்றமை என்பன இடம்பெற்றன. அந்த இரவு அவர் விரும்பும் மதுவும் மாமிசமும் அவற்றை சுவைத்த வண்ணம் அவர் கூறியவை என்மனதில் திரை எறிகின்றன.

எவரையும் கடுமையாக, கரடு முரடான வார்த்தைகளால் விமர்சிக்கும் சிவராமை பகல் பொழுதில் கண்டேன். அவரது தமிழ் தேசியத்தை, அதனை சங்க காலத்து வீரயுகத்தோடு இணைத்துக்காட்டிய பாங்கை தனக்குத்துணையாக சங்க காலத்து ஔவையை தழுவிக்கொண்ட அவரது வாழ்வுக் கோலங்களை கண்டு சுவைத்தேன்.

புறநானூற்றில் பல பாடல்களை பாணர் குலத்தில் பிறந்த ஔவை பாடியுள்ளாள். அவற்றில் ஒன்றில் இருந்து ஓரிரு வரிகளை அவர் எடுத்து விளக்கினார்.

அதியமான் நெடுமானஞ்சி ஔவையை ஆதரித்த மன்னன். அவனது அரண்மனையில் ஔவையின் குரலுக்குப் பெரும் மதிப்பு. அந்கத மன்னன் இறந்தபோது விறலியாகிய (ஆடல் பெண்) ஔவை புலம்புகின்றாள். அதில் அரிதாகப் பெற்ற மதுவை எனக்குத்தருவாய். பெரிய அளவில் மது இருக்கும்போது எம்மைப் பாட வைத்து நீயும் அருந்துவாய் என்ற கருத்துப்படும்.

“சிறியகட் பெறினே எமக்கு ஈயும் மன்னே
பெரியகட் பெறினே யாம் பாட தான் மகிழ்ந்துண்ணும் மன்னே.....” என்ற பாடலே அது.

இதில் சிறிய கள் என்பதற்கு உரையாசிரியர்கள் சிறு அளவான கள் என்ற அர்த்தத்தில் உரை எழுதியிருக்க, சிவராமோ அது ஒரு அதிவிசேடமான மதுவைக் குறிக்கும் எனக் கூறியதை எண்ணி வியந்தேன்.

மதுவையும், மாமிசத்தையும் சுவைத்து அவற்றை வாழ்வின் இயல்பாக்கியவள் ஔவை. அதனை பாட்டுக்குப் பொருளாக்கிய வெட்கப்படாத நேர்மை உண்மையில் பற்றுறுதி, அறிவுத்திறன், நிர்பந்தங்களுக்கு வளையாது வீரத்தைப் போற்றும் திண்ணம், தமிழ்பற்று, மண்பற்று என்பன எல்லாம் சேர்ந்த ஔவை சிவராமிற்கு ஆதர்சமாக இருந்ததைக் கண்டேன்.

என் இனம் மிஞ்சும், என் மண் மிஞ்சும், நான் இறுதிவரை போராடி மடிந்தேன் என்ற வரலாறு மிஞ்சும் என்ற சிவராமை எப்படி மறக்க முடியும்.

சங்க இலக்கியத்தில் ஆழ்ந்த பரிச்சியம், அரசியல் தத்துவங்கள், உலக வரலாறு, தமிழர் வரலாறு, திராவிட இயக்கங்கள் பற்றிய ஆழ்ந்த பார்வை, இராணுவம் போரியல் சம்பந்தப்பட்ட கூர்மையான அறிவு, மாக்சிய சிந்தனைகள் இன்ன பிறவும் அவர் ஊனினை உருக்கி உள்ளொளி பெருக்கி அவரது எழுத்துக்களில் ஆதிக்கம் செலுத்துவதை நாம் அறிவோம். துப்பாக்கி கொண்டு எழுதுவதுபோல் அவர் வார்க்கும் எழுத்துக்களில் பொய்மைக்கு அடிபணிய மறுக்கும் ஒரு போர்க்குணத்தை காணமுடியும்.

சிவராம் எழுதிய எழுத்துக்களை நாம் வாசிக்கும்போது அவர் எழுதாத எழுத்துக்கள் எம் மனதில் விரிவதை நாம் உணர்கின்றோம். இந்த உணர்வின் ஆழ அகலம் அவரவர் அறிவு அனுபவம் சார்ந்து வேறு வேறு காட்சிக் கோலங்களை காட்டுவதை அவர் எழுத்தை வாசிப்போரின் உரையாடல்களில் இருந்து ஊகிக்க முடியும்.

சொல்லக் கூடாதவற்றை பூடகமாக அவர் ஒரு புதிரோடு எழுதும்பாணி அவரது தனித்துவமான ஆளுமை. தமிழ் எழுத்துக்களில் மண்ணின் மைந்தர்களின் வட்டார வழக்குத் தமிழை அவர் கையாளும் லாவகம் ஒரு தனியான பாணி.

தமிழ்த் தேசியத்திற்கு, தமிழர் தாயகக் கோட்பாட்டிற்கு என்றுமில்லாத அளவில் சவாலும் சோதனையும் ஏற்பட்டபோது தமிழ் கூறும் நல்லுலகமே தவித்தபோது ஆழக்கடலில் இருந்து அலைகடலின் மேலிருந்து ஒலித்த சிவராமின் குரலும் எழுத்தும் பிரதேச வாதங்களை சுக்கு நூறாக்கி தமிழ் தேசியத்தின் தாயகக் கோட்பாட்டின் வலுவை நித்தியத்தை உலகின் முன் நிறுத்தியது.

சுற்றி நின்ற பகை நடுவே துள்ளிவந்த வேலாக அவர் வலம் வந்தார். இவரது இந்தச் செயலை தமிழ் ஈழம் என்றுமே மறவாது என்பது திண்ணம். தென் தமிழ் ஈழத்தின் இருப்பு ஒட்டு மொத்தமான தமிழ்த்

தேசியத்தின் வலுவில் மட்டுமே தங்கியுள்ளது என்ற யதார்த்தத்தை சிவராம் புரிய வைத்த விதம், நேரம் என்பன அவர் வரலாற்றை முன்னின்று நகர்த்திய செயற்பாடுகள் எனலாம்.

சிவராமிடம் இருந்து அரசியலைப் படித்தல் (Learning Politics from Sivaram)என்னும் நு:லின் ஆசிரியரான Mark Whitaker (an associate professor of anthropology at the university of south carolina USA) சிவராமின் மரணத்திற்கு பின்வருமாறு கலங்குகின்றார்.

" I shall mourn for him, my lost best friend, for the rest of my life. I ask all of you who knew him well, friend and foe-for he would talk with anyone-to raise a glass and toast him. And may those that killed him look on in shame"

ஆபத்துக்களும் பகையும் தன்னை சூழ்ந்தருப்பதை அறிந்த சிவராம் தன் மனைவியன் உறவுகள் வெளிநாட்டில் இருப்பதாகக் கூறியபோது கொஞ்ச நாட்கள் தன்னும் வெளிநாடு ஒன்றில் இருந்தால் என்ன என வினவியபோது" சோறு தான் வாழ்க்கை என்றால் எங்கும் வாழலாம். அதுவும் ஒரு வாழ்வா" என்ற ஔவையை (எத்திசை செலினும் அத்திசை சோறே) நினைவூட்டினார்.

ஔவையின் சிறியகட் பாடலில் சிவராம் பாடாது விட்ட வரிகளான "இனி பாடுனரும் இல்லை, பாடுனர்க்கு ஒன்று ஈகுனரும் இல்லை" என்னும் வரிகளை காணிக்கையாக்கி அமர்கின்றேன்.



Sivaram's Murder Never Took Place!

"The Hostage has taken the place of the warrior .He has become the principle actor, the simulacral protagonist, or rather in his pure inaction, the protagonizer of non war" Jean Badurillard

Dharmaratnam Sivaram was physically laid to rest yesterday, but as a man who pioneered the internet to build an online community linking a transnational Diaspora; his assassins should realize that Sivaram's death never took place. In a society where media technologies have destroyed the living other of all humans, where simulation have become the engine of life, Siva lives in his own world beyond the physical contours in the virtual galaxy.

What the killers have only silenced are the physical movements of a being who lived in two worlds. Physical home, family, secret meetings, political gatherings, restaurants and pubs was his first world. Siva lived in a broader world rather a universe where he surfed the waves of the information galaxy transforming it into a powerful symbolic existence of a virtual life.

This is the power of the virtual Siva he was the icon for Tamils globally of a cyborg diaspora, thus a bullet is a harmless projectile in this fluid world that the net has built. When one enters the realm of studying the configuration and architecture of the world beyond ours we enter the rewired parallel universe of our own existence.

What Siva built online was not his tomb but his life through eternity; these made him fearless and live a courageous life among all hostilities never taking refuge in physical bunkers as he had discovered the power of the force which he had harnessed. As a researcher on cyber culture, communities and strategic cyber engagement this is my initial impression of reports of his physical transcendence to the virtual life or the so called death of Taraki.

I only new Siva (Dharmeratnam Sivaram) for less than two years and may have met him less than five times. Does this gives me the right to comment about a man who is no more and with multitudes of articles written by people whom he knew, associated and led his political life for years. This is an alternative view of a man who revolutionized the web based media solutions sector in Sri Lanka from serious researcher on the cyber frontier and its impact on the Sri Lankan polity.

I first met Siva at a local pub, my meeting with him was mediated by a fellow journalist and a good friend of Siva but whose ideology was total opposite to what Siva wrote and stood for but who always accepted the democratic space for journalism can not be colonized by one single entity. This was the time when I was freelancing for a leading national weekly. As a student completing his research thesis in cyber conflicts and cyber communities for my undergraduate research thesis I sought Siva's help. In this first meeting I perceived it as primary data collection excursion, what was build on from that meeting was a humble respect to a man whose intellectual capacity and the sublime temperament exceeded that of the so called academics of this state. This engagement led to the build up of a discussion with Siva which spanned to the date of this tragic murder. The core contents of it were the intensive discussions debates on the life on net and the amazing dynamics cyber space created within the Sri Lankan context of ethnic conflict, peace process and reconstruction of the nation.

Siva understood trends of cyber culture remarkably he used to discuss in length the growth of this phenomenon and what potential we can harness from it. His operationability on the net displayed the strategic use of web based news services. His expertise was sought in many states both by the civil society and state on success of www.Tamilnet.com . Siva more than anybody else understood the emergence of a transnational Tamil Diaspora and the vacuum that was created with lack of a solid network. The LTTE already had a huge network going from the eighties but I would identify Tamilnet as an alternative network which gave voice to the voiceless while always standing up for the Tamil cause.

All the Tigers may have had access to the Tamilnet but all tamilnet surfers are not Tigers, thus in this context Siva exploited the ICT revolution to the maximum. This made him a very valuable asset to the Tamil interests and this took him closer to the LTTE. While Sinhala extremists perceived him to be a tiger claw in the Lions den, Tigers wanted his strategic insight and mastery of web-editing to benefit their own agenda. This man I felt sometimes may have been under huge stress because of this matter but later on the dysfunctional politics of the nation took a greater toll on him - his eastern origin, breaking away with Karuna, soft spot to the Wanni, vociferous and hurting attacks on the Sinhala chauvinists.

The writer's whole argument is that Siva may have transcended physical life and will definitely live through in the virtual frontier. As mentioned earlier he always existed in two worlds, the assassins only took away his existence in one but may have ensured his deification in the other. The bullet may have silenced citizen Siva but may have woken up a Charismatic cyber Siva. As in virtual reality it becomes difficult to define where the boundary of the body is. We all have witnessed a simulation of a murder, the spirit, voice and passion of Siva lives safely on the NET.

நீ விட்டுச் சென்ற பணி தொடரும்

- திருமகள்

உன் சாவு மக்கள் ஆட்சிக்கு ஒரு சாவு மணி
உன் சாவு எழுத்துச் சுதந்திரத்துக்கு ஒரு மரண அடி
உன் சாவு எண்ணச் சுதந்திரத்துக்கு ஒரு அறைகூவல்
உன் சாவு மனித குலத்துக்குத் தீராத வடு
உன் சாவு மனித நேயத்துக்கு ஏற்பட்ட கறை!

உன் நாட்டுப்பற்று கடலை விடப் பெரியது
உன் இனமானம் வானை விட உயர்ந்தது
உன் எழுதுக்கள் தமிழ்த் தேசியத்துக்கு நீரூற்றியது
உன் கருத்துக்கள் தமிழீழ விடுதலைக்கு எருவானது!
உன் நுண்மாண் நுழைபுலம் போராட்டத்துக்கு அரணானது!

உன் எழுத்துக்கு மாற் றெழுத்து
உன் கருத்துக்கு எதிர்க் கருத்து
உன் வாதத்துக்கு எதிர் வாதம்
முன் வைக்க வக்கற்ற அறிவிலிகள்
உன்னைக் கோழைத்தனமாகக் கொன்று விட்டார்கள்!

ஊடகவுலகின் மன்னன் என உலா வந்தவனே
நடமாடும் பல்கலைக் கழகமென புகழப் பட்டவனே
உன் எழுத்துக்கள் சாகா வரம் பெற்றவை
உன் கருத்துக்கள் ஊழிக் காலத்தை வென்றவை
உன் சாதனை இமயத்தை விட உயர்ந்தவை!

தன் வீடு தன்குடும்பம் என வாழாது
என் மண் என்மக்கள் என் இனம்
என நாளும் பொழுதும் வாழ்ந்தவன் நீ!
உன்னைப் போல் இன்னொரு எழுத்து ழவனை
என்றுதான் காண்போம் என்ன நோன்பு நோற்போம்!

இன் முகம்! கள்ளமில்லா வெள்ளை மனம்!
அன்பான பேச்சு! கனிவான பார்வை! தோற்றத்தில்
எளிமை! நடத்தையில் நேர்மை அறிவில் கூர்மை
பெற்ற தாய்மீதும் பிறந்த மண்மீதும் காதல்!

கொண்ட கோட்பாட்டில் உறுதி! போகும்பாதையில் தெளிவு!
அண்டம் குலைந்தாலும் நிலைகுலையாத கொள்கைக் கோமான்!
உன்னைப் போல் ஒரு அறிவாளியை தமிழுலகில்
என்றுதான் காண்போம்? எத்தனை காலம் காத்திருப்போம்?

உன் உடலைத்தான் எதிரிகளால் அழிக்க முடிந்தது
உன் உயிரைத்தான் பகைவர்களால் பறிக்க முடிந்தது!
உன் கருத்துக்களை யாருமே அழிக்க முடியாது!
உன் நினைவுகளை எவருமே ஒழிக்க முடியாது!
அவை காலம் காலமாக நீடித்து நிற்கும்!

என் அன்னைத் தாய்மொழி மேல் ஆணை!
என் எழுது கோல் மேல் ஆணை!
உன் ஆசைக் கனவுளை நனவாக்குவேன்! நீ
சென்ற பாதையில் என் கால்கள் செல்லும்
நீ விட்டுச் சென்ற பணி தொடரும்!

Sivaram

- Ananda Kumar

A flame burnt bright and clear
A brilliance that none can come near
Your life and work had no speck of fear
We mourn for you, while some fools cheer

Your thoughts and sights brought reality
So near to those of us-- lost in evil's cruelty
We saw clear in your light of veracity
Then dawned this sad day of your trip to eternity

Rabid dogs left you by the river of death
That runs past the palace of myth
You groaned and breathed your last for truth
That your folk may have steadier pith

We mourn for you, our dear brother 'Taraki'
The World knows your life of uncompromised bravery
A man of honor; a life of simplicity
Lived for others; may live for eternity.



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